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CONCISE GUIDE OF DELPHI

BY

PERICLES COLLAS

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A CONCISE GUIDE OF DELPHI

BY

PERICLES COLLAS

ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGPAPHS
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ATHENS TO DELPHI

The easiest route from Athens to Delphi is the motor road leading through Thebes, Levadia and Arachova.

From Athens, the Sacred Road or Hiera Hodos (today : Iera Odos), follows the line of the ancient sacred way to Eleusis. The name was given to the road because it joined Athens to Eleusis, and was the route of the sacred processions.

The famous Byzantine Monastery of Daphni, dating from the end of the 11th century A.D., stands a little after the 9th km. A visit will reward the tourist with a view of its magnificent mosaics justly renowned as the most beautiful in Greece.

Beyond the 11th km. to the right, there is a rock with niches for offerings which shows the place of an ancient precinct of Aphrodite.

On reaching the sea, the road turns northwards. There, one can see the lake of Koumoundouros which is the first of the two ancient tarns called the Rhetoi which were dedicated to Demetra and Kore.

Eleusis is situated at the 21st km. It was the site of the mystic religious ceremonies called Mysteries, and of festivals and processions in honour of Demetra and Persephone or Kore. The local antiquities are of some interest: the sacred precinct, the museum and the acropolis.

The pass between the hills of Mt. Cithæron, Petrogerakas (1015 meters) and Stavraetos (854 meters) begins at Kaza (50th kms.). On the right hand side there is an isolated height crowned with ruins of a fortress of the 4th century B.C. It is the castle of Eleutherae, which was believed to be the birthplace of Dionysus.

After crossing the pass the road enters the plain of Boeotia. The ancient city of Thebes is situated at the 90th km. The legends of Cadmus and Oedipus are associated with the city. In historical times Thebes was nearly always opposed to Athens. Pelopidas and Epaminondas were born at Thebes. The town has an interesting museum.

The fertile plain between Thebes and Levadia was once the lake Copais.

Levadia is at a distance of something over 45kms. from Thebes. One can see the ruins of a Frankish castle. The town has an abundant water supply, and the sources Mnemosyne and Lethe are mentioned by ancient travellers.

Arachova, which one meets 38 kms. after Levadia and 10 kms. before Delphi, is a small mountain town of about 3,600 inhabitants. It lies at a height of 942 meters on the slopes of mount Parnassus. Among other things, it is a convenient starting point for an ascent to the summit of the mountain (2457 meters).

Delphi is at a distance of 163 kms. from Athens.

Fig. 1. The area of Delphi.

DELPHI

THE LANDSCAPE

At about 10 kms. due west of Arachova, in a large semi-circular recess on the southern slope of mount Parnassus, one finds one of the most beautiful landscapes in Greece: the sacred site of Delphi.

The huge rocks of the Phaedriades (= bright; luminous; the shining ones) rise to the north.

In their eastern section they are divided by a deep narrow gorge where the spring of Castalia wells forth. The high crag on the right, the modern **Flemboukos,** was the ancient **Hyampeia** from the top of which the sacrilegious were hurled. The crag on the left is **Rhodini.**

Most of the antiquities lie on the semicircular steep under the Phaedriades, at an average altitude of 570 meters. The modern town of Delphi (commonly known as Castri) was formerly built on the site of the precinct of Apollo. The town was removed to its present position after 1892, so that the excavations, chiefly conducted by the French Archaeological School of Athens, could be carried out.

South of Delphi there is a wide gorge, through which runs the river of Pleistos; and the mountain Cirphis rises on the opposite side of the gorge.

In the distance beyond, in sharp contrast to the wild scenery of the Phaedriades, the mild and idyllic olive grove of Crisa (modern Chryso) stretches in a southwesterly direction down to the gulf of Itea and the ancient port of Delphi, Cirrha.

The Delphi scenery is one of the most grandiose and inspiring in Greece. It is one of the few historical sites where a visitor, even with a very sketchy historical knowledge, may immediately come into communion with the ancient spirit. An acquaintance with the historical back-

ground and a visit to the antiquities will help the visitor to appreciate, and perhaps never to forget, the cultural radiance of the place.

HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

At Delphi too, as in other parts of Greece, it was undoubtedly the nature of the site that inspired the legend, so that later historical events seem to be a natural continuation to tradition.

The cult at Delphi already existed in Mycenaean times, the so called Heroic Age, as is proved by the Mycenaean remains found in the locality (see Historical Notes). Originally the sanctuary was dedicated to Earth - Themis (a dual divinity personifying Mother Earth - and the goddess of Justice, Themis) and to Poseidon, the god of the sea and "shaker of the earth" (from the earthquakes he was believed to cause). At first the name of the site was Pytho, and there was an oracle where the priestess Pythia foretold the future. The place-name was ascribed to Python, a serpent-dragon who was believed to guard the oracle.

Later, tradition goes, Cretans from Cnossus introduced the worship of Apollo, whose symbol was a dolphin and who sometimes took its form. This "Delphinian" Apollo slew the dragon Python and took possession of the oracle, thus giving Delphi its name. The new worship of Apollo, the sun - god, the god of light, as years went by, gave

the site its spiritual radiance. It was principally as the inspirer of the Delphic celebrations, the Pythian games, in wich artistic expression played a preponderent role, that Apollo came to be considered as the symbol of poetic inspiration, and Parnassus as a mountain dedicated to him and the Muses.

The characteristic institutions of the sacred city of Delphi were three, namely: the Oracle, the Amphictionic League and the Pythian Games.

The Oracle: The oracle of Delphi was one of the foremost oracles in the Greek world, i. e. one of the places where the future was foretold. The prophecies were given by the Pythia, who at the beginning was a young woman. After the Persian wars she was chosen among women of advanced years. She delivered her prophecies in the *adyton* (innermost recess) of the Temple of Apollo. No doubt she was aided in her task by the priests and other attendants of her entourage. She foretold the future and gave advice to visitors who thronged to Delphi from all points of the then known world in order to visit the sanctuary and consult the oracle. After having purified herself with the water of Castalia (Fig. 1) and drunk from that of the Cassotis spring (Fig. 2, No. 32), the Pythia seated herself on a tripod over the *chasma*, a cleft in the earth from which vapours arose. There, chewing laurel leaves, Apollo's plant, she uttered her oracles, under the influence of the fumes, and,

as was believed, inspired by the god. The answers, or oracles, were written down (very often into verses) by the attending priests. The advice was given to persons of all classes on important occasions in their lives, such as marriages, sales of property, etc. The cities too, officially, sought the advice of the Delphic oracle on important domestic or foreign affairs, such as the founding of a colony, the entering into an alliance or the participation in a war. Just as in the case of private individuals, the cities too, felt a greater confidence and obtained renewed strength in the execution of a contemplated project when they were sure of the moral support of the Oracle.

Of course the Pythia's answers were often given in an ambiguous form so that the Oracle could never be called wrong. The answers must sometimes have been incorrect, and, on certain occasions, they were questionable, as was the case during the Persian wars when the Oracle hedged in face of the almost panhellenic coalition against the invaders. However they must, in their great majority, have constituted good and sound advice as being the outcome of the profound knowledge of social and political affairs which the priesthood of Apollo must have possessed.

A typical example of an equivocal answer by the Oracle is given in the often cited story of king Croesus of Lydia Asia Minor, 6th century B. C.) who asked the Oracle whether he should attack the Persian empire or await a more favourable occasion. The Oracle is said to have given

its celebrated equivocal answer, that "if the King were to cross the river Halys (boundary of his empire) he would destroy a great empire". Croesus, believing that by "great empire" the Oracle meant the Persian empire, crossed the river, thus actually destroying a great empire, which, however, was his own.

The Amphictionic league of Delphi. The Amphiction c leagues (from the word *amphictiones* meaning "dwellers around" were associations of neighbouring city-states, situated around a shrine, originally for reasons of common worship. With the passing of the years, commercial intercourse was established among the members of the league, and thus they gradually took the form of loose political unions which attended to the common interests of their members. The city members were bound by formal obligations of mutual respect and aid.

The oldest of the Amphictionic leagues was the Thermopylaean League, whose assemblies were called Pylaean assemblies. Later, this Amphictionic League assembled twice a year, in the autumn at Anthela, near Thermopylae, and in spring at Delphi. Twelve Greek peoples formed this Delphic or Pylaeodelphic Amphictionic League, among which were the Phocians, Boeotians, Magnetes and Thessalians. This league later became mainly Delphic, and convened also whenever a special occasion demanded.

The Amphictionic Council arbitrated on va-

rious differences that cropped up between city-members and that is why this institution may be regarded as a forerunner of modern political organizations such as the U. N. O.

Unfortunately the Amphictionic Council was not always able to enforce its resolutions on the more powerful members of the League and, owing to the strongly individualistic character of the Greek city-states, this excellent institution did not succeed in bringing about a permanent union of all the Greeks.

The Pythian Games: The Pythian Games (or Pythia) were celebrated in honour of Apollo's victory over Python. The games were held every four, and sometimes every eight, years, at the end of the summer. The Greek cities sent representatives bearing gifts to these festivals. The splendid celebration included religious rites and plays representing Apollo's fight with the dragon, and musical contests in instrumental music and song which were held in the Theatre (Plan 2, No. 29). Later there were performances of tragedies and comedies. A particular glory was attached to the athletic games in the Stadium (Fig. 1) and the chariot races on the race course down in the plain. Laurel wreaths were awarded as prizes.

* * *

To the sanctuary of the god of light, private citizens and nations used to come to consult the oracle and be enlightened on the present and

the future, to compete in athletic and cultural games and, in the measure of each one's power, to share in the light of ancient wisdom.

Something of this heritage may still be shared, it is hoped, by the present-day visitor to Delphi.

HISTORICAL NOTES

Delphi did not play a commanding role in Greek history, because it was never a city-state with independent forces that could be compared with states such as Athens or Sparta. Delphi was never able to change the course of events by playing an active part in them. Politically its influence consisted in the authority with which it vested many an important decision taken by the Greeks.

The real importance of Delphi is in its spiritual radiance and influence.

The magnificent monuments, buildings and works of art, the splendid celebrations, the motley crowd of pilgrims seen there, and the variety of languages heard, the teachings of the sages and, above all, the reverential awe inspired by the place itself, could not but have a marked effect on the heart and mind of the visitor and, through him, on the community to which he belonged, even beyond the boundaries of the Greek world.

For the Greeks particularly, Delphi, as a religious and cultural centre, fostered among them

the idea and pride of racial, if not of political, unity. Furthermore, as regards the other non-Greek or half-Greek peoples, Delphi was considered to confer a certain Greek character, e.g. to those of them who sought the oracle's favour. Such was the case of the two fabulously rich and mighty kings of Lydia in Asia Minor, Gyges (687 - 652 B.C.) and Croesus (560 - 546 B.C.), who by their sumptuous presents to Apollo, were obviously seeking to obtain their recognition as components of the Greek world proper. And this hellenizing influence of Delphi should not be forgotten either.

The following is a brief chronology of the main events in the history of Delphi.

1500 - 1100 B.C. During this period, which belongs to the **Mycenaean Age**, the cult of Apollo was probably established at Delphi, and the site took its present name.

1100 - 1000 B.C. (approx.) **Invasion and settlement of the Dorians** (a Greek race coming from the north) **in Greece.** At the end of this period Delphi became the seat of the Delphic Amphictionic League.

1000 - 600 B.C. **Expansion and enrichment of Delphi.** The town grew and was enriched with buildings, monuments and works of art. Its religious influence spread and began indirectly playing an important role in the Greek world.

600 - 590 B.C. **First Sacred War.** The people near Delphi, the Boeotians and Thessalians, with the aid of the Athenians among others, attacked Crisa, with the excuse that the pilgrims to Delphi, passing through their territory, were exploited by the inhabitants. Crisa was destroyed. Delphi was proclaimed an independent city. The Amphictionic Council took over the administration of the shrine and the Pythian games.

590 - 490 B.C. **Era of prosperity.** The treasuries of the Corinthians, Siphians, and Sicyonians, and the Portico of the Athenians were built. The year 548 saw the **destruction by fire of the Temple of Apollo.** The great Athenian family of the Alcmaeonids undertook an international collection of funds for its reconstruction. Large sums were contributed by Croesus, the fabulously rich king of Lydia, in Asia Minor, and Amasis, king of Egypt. The work was carried out by the Corinthian architect Spintharos.

490 - 480 B.C. **The Persian Wars.** The Persian invasion was met by the united forces of the majority of the Greek cities. Together with some Greeks of the north, Delphi, fearing the ravages of an enemy invasion, kept a neutral, if not friendly, attitude towards the Persians. The Treasury of the Athenians was dedicated from the spoils of the battle of Marathon, where for the first time the

Greeks defeated the Persians. The naval victories of Salamis and Artemision were also commemorated by votive offerings. The decisive battle of Plataea was immortalized by the offering of the famous tripod and column of the twisted serpents.

480-421 B. C. **Participation in inter-state Wars.** Delphi took part in the various wars between the powerful city-states of Athens, Sparta, Thebes, Argos, etc. Sometimes Delphi was on the side of the vanquished, yet friends and foes alike continued their offerings. In 448 the Phocians occupied and held it for one year. Delphi regained its independence, which was solemnized in 421.

373 B.C. **Destruction of the Temple by an earthquake.** For the second time an international collection was launched for its reconstruction. The new temple was completed in 330. The existing remains belong to this later temple.

355-345 B. C. **The Second Sacred War.** At the instigation of the Thebans, Delphi accused the Phocians of having cultivated the sacred valley of Crisa, which was considered a sacrilege. The Second Sacred War broke out, and the Delphic treasures were plundered by the Phocians.

352-339 B.C. **Philip II king of Macedon,** now entered the scene, as a "mediator" in the

struggle. He took the place of the Phocians in the Amphictionic Council and forced them to pay a yearly indemnity which was used in rebuilding the Temple.

339-338 B. C. **The Third Sacred War.** Once more the Amphictions invoked Philip's aid against the Amphissians who were accused of cultivating the sacred plain. Philip invaded Greece, defeated the united army of the Athenians, Thebans and allies, at Chaeronea, and destroyed Amphissa. He was proclaimed the leader of the united Greeks against the barbarians.

300 B. C. **The Aetolians.** The Macedonian domination was followed by the domination of the Aetolians.

279 B. C. **The inroad of the Gauls.** These barbarians, under their leader Brennus, descending from the north, reached the entrance of the sacred precinct but were repulsed by the Phocians and Aetolians. The festival Soteria (salvation festival) was established in memory of this victory.

189 B. C. **The Romans** ousted the Aetolians, and Delphi was once more proclaimed an independent city.

109 B. C. Delphi was invaded by the **Gauls and the Thracians,** who were repulsed by the Romans.

86 B. C. The Roman general Sulla inflicted a heavy levy on Delphi which was forced to strip its shrines and treasuries in order to pay his soldiers. A period of general economic and religious decline had long set in.

27 B.C.- 273 A.D. The Roman emperors attempted to encourage a revival of the Delphic cult. The Emperor Augustus reorganized the Amphictionic League. Domitian (81 - 96 A. D.) and the imperial family of the Antonini (138 - 180 A, D.) carried out reconstruction work. On the other hand Nero seized hundreds of statues and countless objects of value. Pausanias, the traveller, who visited Delphi in 170 A. D., found it however still rich in works of art, and Pliny the Younger estimated the existing statues at 3,000. The historian Plutarch was a priest at Delphi from 105 to 126 A. D.

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The decline of Delphi. From the second century A. D. onwards, scepticism openly spread in the Greek world. The Greek writer Lucian (125 - 180 A. D.) scoffed at the oracles and the gods.The Christian emperors of the Eastern Roman Empire Constantine the Great (273 - 337 A. D.) and Theodosius I (379 - 395) removed whatever had remained at Delphi in order to adorn the new capital city of Constantinople. Theodosius delt the last blow to Delphi, by prohibiting, in the year 381, every form of non-Christian cult

and spiritual movement.

A vain attempt to revive the ancient religion was made by Julian the Apostate (361 - 363), the only pagan emperor at Constantinople. He sent his physician Oribasius to Delphi, as his representative, with a view to rebuild the fallen temple of Apollo. A characteristic picture of the desolation of the site is given by the last recorded oracle of the sanctuary, a wistfully melancholic verse lamenting the end of a cause lost for ever.

The oracle, according to the legend, spoke thus to Julian's emissary:

> "*Go tell the king: The fair-wrought halls*
> *have fallen to the ground;*
> *no longer has Phoebus a shelter here,*
> *no soothsaying laurel, no spring that spake;*
> *even the babbling water is silent now*".

(Phoebus, meaning "bright", was an epithet of Apollo).

* * *

During the long dark ages that followed, man and the elements caused the disappearance of practically all the monuments. The glory that was Delphi came to light again only with the excavations of the French School of Archaeology of Athens which started at the beginning of the 19th century and have been carried on, mostly by that school, until quite recently.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

THE PRECINCT OF APOLLO

The **Sacred Precinct of Apollo** is an irregular quadrilateral (about 200 by 130 meters) enclosed by a wall with many entrances (Fig. 2).

1 Before the main entrance there is the paved area of the **Agora** or Market Place, with traces of Roman buildings around it, chiefly on the north side.

2 This is the **main** or southeast **entrance** to the Precinct. It opens directly on the **Sacred Way** which winds up from here to the Temple of Apollo. Owing to the steep declivity of the site, many terraces with strong retaining walls had to be constructed in order to accommodate the large number of monuments. Breast-walls and other works protected the precinct from the fall of loose earth and rocks as well as from the torrential rain waters. There are steps and short cuts leading to various points. The Precinct was con-

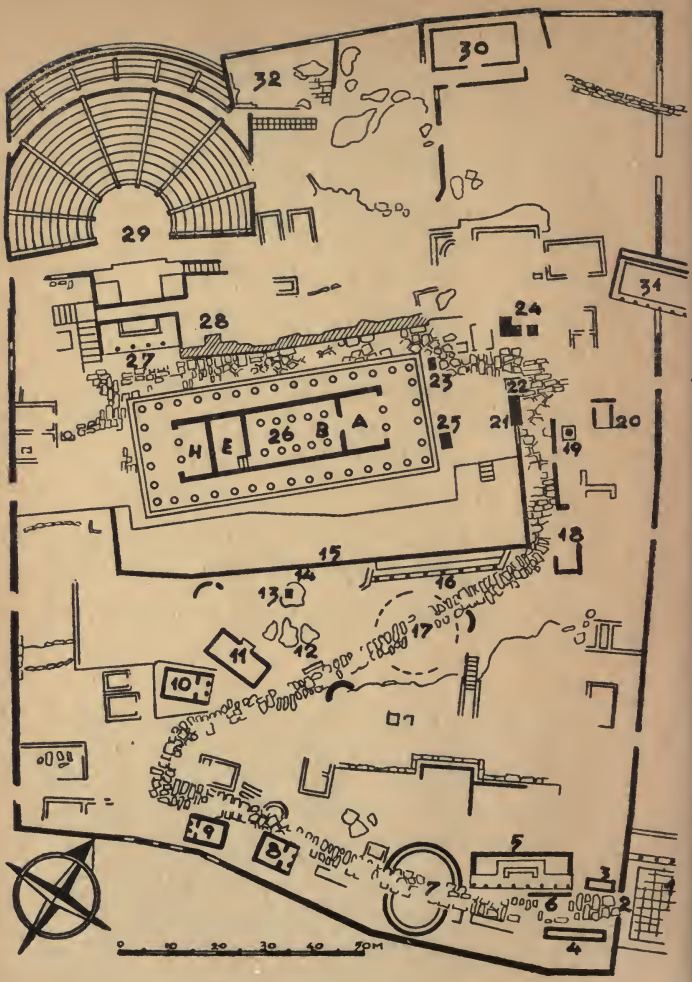

Fig. 2. The Precinct of Apollo.

gested with monuments of every description. Apart from its artistic interest, the Precinct affords a vivid picture of the political character of the Greeks; it is in fact a museum of Greek history. In its relatively narrow space one finds, built close together, treasuries and bases for votive offerings of cities often opposed to each other. One can clearly see that in the Sacred Precinct enmities and differences came to an end and gave place to the idea of a common worship and civilization.

3 On entering the Precinct, the first votive offering on the right was the **Bull of Corcyra** (the Corfu of today) whose base only remains. It was set up by the Corcyraeans, around the year 480 B.C. Pausanias mentions that it was a thank offering for an exceptionally lucrative harvest of fish. There were many such offerings. Cities and private individuals dedicated monuments and buildings for various reasons, victories in war, commemoration of important events or simply as tokens of reverence. The votive inscriptions still exist on some of them.

4 The first monument on the left is the **Offering of the Athenians** in honour of their general Miltiades who led the Greeks to victory at Marathon. It was constructed c. 460 B.C. The monument supported sixteen statues of gods and Athenian heroes, among which that of Miltiades himself.

5 A little farther on, on the opposite side of the Way, was the **Offering of the Lacedaemonians** dedicated in 403 B.C. by Lysander, the Spartan general, for his victory over the Athenians at Aegospotami in 405 B.C., a victory which marked the end of the Peloponnesian War. The monument consisted of a portico with 37 statues, including the figure of Lysander being crowned by the gods.

6 Adjoining the right-hand side of the façade is the **Offering of the Arcadians,** erected in commemoration of the victory of the Arcadian League at Leuctra in 371 B.C., when the Arcadians together with the Thebans under Epaminondas defeated the Spartans. The monument comprised many statues of gods and Arcadian heroes, and its position clearly shows the intention of the builders to belittle the Lacedemonian offering.

7 The two semi-circular buildings on the right and left of the Way were **monuments of the Argives** for victories over the Spartans.

The Sacred Way is 4 to 5 meters wide, and its present paving, which consists in part of older materials, inscriptions, etc., is Roman.

8 Following the Sacred Way one reaches the **Treasury of the Sicyonians.**

The treasuries were small buildings in the form of temples. They are often real master-

pieces of architecture. They were used for the safeguarding of valuable offerings and sometimes as meeting-places of the representatives of a city. The Treasury of the Sicyonians was in the Doric order and was built by the Sicyonians (Sicyon was near Corinth) of grey porous stone, at about the end of the 6th century B. C. Some beautiful sculptures from this building are in the Delphi Museum.

9 A little farther on is the **Treasury of the Siphnians,** in the Ionic order, built in 535 - 530 B.C. from the proceeds of the Siphnos gold mines. There is a plaster reproduction of the façade in the Museum.

10 At the bend, on the left, one meets the **Treasury of the Athenians,** a lovely building in simple and noble lines. It was adorned by beautiful sculptures showing the feats of Herakles and Theseus, who were particularly honoured by the Athenians. The walls were covered with inscriptions of religious or local character, Delphic edicts honouring celebrated Athenians and two hymns to Apollo which are now in the Museum. These are especially interesting for their ancient musical notation marked between the lines of the text. The Treasury was dedicated in 490 - 485 B.C. from a part of the spoils from the battle of Marathon. The trophies of this battle were exhibited on the small triangular platform to the south of the building.

11 A little higher up on the left one sees the **Prytaneion or Bouleuterion,** with its entrance perhaps on the northeast. This was the seat of the Council of 15 bouleutai (councillors, senators) and 8 prytaneis (presidents) who attended to all Delphic affairs.

12 A rather large rock, with steps cut in it, is known as the **Sibylla's Rock.** According to tradition the Sibylla (= prophetess or seeress) Erophile from Erythrae (near Smyrna, in Asia Minor) foretold the future at this spot, before the time of the Pythia, and it was believed that she had prophesised the Trojan War.

13 The **Sphinx of the Naxians** stood on top of another rock here. This monument, built about 550 B.C., was in the shape of a high Ionic column bearing on top the figure of a sphinx (a mythological winged monster, half woman and half beast).

14 To the northeast of the Bouleuterion there stood the precinct of **Earth-Themis** (see "Historical and Religious Background"), the site of the first oracle, the one Python guarded. The oracle was over a cleft in the ground from which vapours issued forth.

15 The long wall (83 meters), in front of the monument of the Sphinx, is the **retaining wall**

of the terrace of Apollo's Temple. It was built of large polygonal stone blocks joined together with marvellous accuracy and fineness of workmanship, as a breast wall, when the Alcmaeonids undertook the construction of the Temple in the first half of the 6th century B.C. The wall is covered by more than 800 inscriptions comprising orders, resolutions and various administrative records. The wall and its northward extensions were probably crowned with statues.

16 In front of the eastern end of the wall there was the **Portico of the Athenians,** built after 506 B.C. to house the spoils from the wars against the Boeotians and Chalcidians. The portico consisted of a colonnade of eight Ionic columns of Parian marble, and was 30 meters long.

17 The open space in front of the Portico of the Athenians was known as the **Halos** or threshing-floor. It was surrounded by seats, and was used for meetings and festivals. The "miracle play" of the slaying of Python was performed here, and it was the spot where the processions assembled before mounting to the Temple.

18 Ascending the Sacred Way one sees various treasuries and votive offerings; among others the site of the **Treasury of the Corinthians,** renowned for its wealth.

19 Here is the round stone base on which the **Tripod of Plataea** stood. This offering was made out of part of the spoils from the battle of Plataea (479 B.C.), where the united armies of most of the Greek cities defeated the Persians in this last and decisive battle on the Greek mainland. On the stone base there stood a gilded bronze pillar, consisting of three interwined serpents, which rose to a height of 6 meters. The names of the 31 cities that had participated in the victory were inscribed on the sperpents' bodies. The serpents' heads supported a golden tripod, which was later (355 - 345 B.C.) stolen by the Phocians. The lower part of the pillar of serpents is now in the Hippodrome of Constantinople (today's Istanbul) where Constantine the Great had placed it.

20 A little to the east is the square base of a monument representing the **Chariot of the Sun** (identified with Apollo), an offering of the Rhodians.

21 The great **Altar of Apollo** stood in front of the eastern entrance of the Temple. It was offered by the Chians in 518 B.C., and, together with the altar of Zeus at Olympia, was the most venerated altar in the Greek world.

22 Touching the Altar on the north, there stood the gilded bronze **statue of Eumenes II,**

king of Pergamus (197 - 159 B.C.), a great friend of the Romans and enemy of the Macedonians, who built many monuments and several cities.

23 The space before the Temple was the most important site for offerings. Among many others there was the **Monument of Prusias,** king of Bithynia (192 - 148 B. C). Its high square pedestal stands now almost touching the Temple, a little to the west of its original position.

24 The four **tripods of Gelon and Hieron,** tyrants of Syracuse, and their two brothers, stood on round pedestals at this point. On the left of Gelon's offering was the **Column of Acanthus,** a reproduction of which is in the Museum. It was probably an offering of the town of Acanthus in Macedonia, symbolized by the acanthus leaves on the column. Its top was adorned by the figures of three charming dancers, the Thyiades (women followers of Dionysus).

25 This number marks the position of the Monument of **Paulus Aemilius,** the Roman general, who built it after his victory at Pydna in Macedonia, in 168 B.C. when he defeated and captured the king of Macedon Perseus.

26 The **Temple of Apollo**. Its southern and western sides stand on a very large retaining wall, 60 meters long, whose stones have fallen out in many places. The inscriptions on the wall are

accounts concerning the building of the temple. The columns stood on a series of three steps of limestone. The temple was in the Doric order, 60.30 by 23.82 meters, with 6 columns of porous limestone on the façades and 15 on the long sides. The cella, or nave, had two columns on each front. The earthquakes and repeated ravages by man and the elements do not allow one to see the internal division of the cella. This temple, the third on this site, was built after the great earthquake of 373 B. C. The first archaic temple was burnt down in 548 B. C., and the second one was the temple rebuilt by the Alcmaeonids in the years 513 - 505 B. C. We may here try to imagine what the interior of the temple, i. e. of that narrow space so sacred to the ancient world, looked like. The first part of the temple was the *pronaos* or entrance hall (A), on the walls of which were inscribed the well-known maxims of the sages, such as "Know thyself" and "Nothing in excess", which were supposed to move, and no doubt did sometimes succeed in moving, the awe stricken visitor towards a civilized conduct of life. In the pronaos there was a statue of Homer the national poet of the Greeks par excellence. The cella proper (B), where the pilgrims entered, contained the Altar of Poseidon, the statues of the Fates and of Apollo, other sacred objects and an undying fire. The *adyton* (E), or hidden and sacred innermost part of the temple, was a subterranean chamber containing the *omphalos* (a large stone symbolizing the navel or centre of

the earth, which was believed to be at Delphi, as well as Python's grave), a golden Apollo, and the gilded bronze tripod of the Pythia placed over the *chasma*, or cleft in the earth, exhaling the vapours which inspired her. Only the few attendants of the oracle were admitted here. In front of the adyton there was a waiting room for those who had come to consult the oracle. The fact that, at this point, no signs of either a natural opening in the ground or an underground chamber have been found, has led many archaeologists to suggest that there was a *chasma* only at the oracle of Earth-Themis, at No. 14, and that Pythia's chamber was not underground. The *opisthodomos*, or back hall, was at (H). The Temple was adorned outside by figures of gods. The shields taken from the Persians at Plataea hung above the outer columns on the eastern side, while shields captured from the Gauls hung on the western and southern sides. The eastern pediment (triangular gable on the façade) had figures of Artemis, Leto, Apollo, the Muses and the Sun-god setting, while in the western pediment were shown Dionysus and the Thyiades.

27 On this **Terrace**, to the north of the northwest corner of the Temple, there was a large thank-offering commemorating the escape from death of **Alexander the Great** in a lion hunt.

28 This is the spot where the famous bronze statue of the **Charioteer** (now in the Museum) stood.

29 On the left of the terrace of No. 27, a Roman stairway leads to the **Theatre.** The original 4th century building was rebuilt in the 2nd century B.C. by Eumenes II and renovated in Roman times. The theatre could seat 4,000 spectators, as compared with 15,000 for the Theatre of Dionysus in Athens. Here the plays of ancient Greek playwrights are performed at the Modern Delphic Festivals.

30 At this point, built against the north wall of the precinct, was the **Club of the Cnidians.** It was a meeting-place of the Cnidians (Cnidos in Caria, Asia Minor) and was constructed in about the middle of the 5th century B.C. It was adorned internally by works of the famous painter Polygnotus.

31 Mention should be made of the supposed **Portico of Attalus,** built in honour of the king of Pergamon Attalus, father of Eumenes II. This building was later turned into a water reservoir by the Romans in order to supply water to the baths just below.

32 The paved open space between the Club of the Cnidians and the Theatre was the site of

the **Cassotis Spring** whose miraculous water ran into the adyton of the Temple of Apollo. It was probably a reservoir replenished with water from a spring 70 meters higher up, which is now dry, as its waters supply the modern town of Delphi.

THE REGION OUTSIDE THE PRECINCT OF APOLLO

Around the enclosure of the Precinct, there are various ruins of buildings and installations of the ancient city: remains of baths, arcades, streets, houses, etc.

THE STADIUM

The best preserved, and consequently the most interesting remain, is the **Stadium** (Fig. 1), situated northwest of the Precinct, at the highest point of the ancient city (alt. 654 meters). The entrance was at the southeastern corner through an archway. The course is 178.35 meters long and from 25 to 28 meters wide. Rows of seats, particularly on the northern side, are still preserved. It could accomodate 7,000 seated persons as against 50,000 of the Athens Stadium. The existing Stadium is a reconstruction of Roman times, when the stone seats and the archway were built by the great benefactor, Herod Atticus (101-178 A.D.). The athletic contests were held in the Stadium. The chariot races, as mentioned, were run in the plain below.

THE CASTLE OF PHILOMELUS

The ruins of the **Castle of Philomelus,** the Phocian general in the Second Sacred War, are on the hill of Agios Ilias to the west of the Stadium. The castle was built from the plunder of the Delphi treasures.

* * *

Descending from the Castle of Philomelus in a southeastern direction towards the highway, one leaves Castri (the modern Delphi) on the right and finds various traces of ancient settlements, among which the remains of cemeteries (niches in the rocks). The little church of Agios Ilias (St. Elias) with its small (modern) graveyard is there. The wall on the east and north rests on Roman foundations, remains of the *Synedrion,* i.e. of the hall for the meetings of the Amphictionic Council built by the Roman emperor Hadrian in the 2nd century A.D.

THE MUSEUM

The Museum contains numerous objects found in the area. Most of these bear explanatory labels and are so arranged that it is unnecessary to give here an analytical description of them. We therefore give here only the list of rooms of the Museum with a brief mention of those exhibits which are, we may say, of prime interest to the non specialist.

Room I. At No. 1, a big beehive-shaped marble block with sculptured ornamentations is believed by some to represent the *omphalos* or navel, i.e. the centre of the earth, which, the ancients believed, was at Delphi.

Room II. Entirely dedicated to sculptures from the Treasury of the Athenians (Fig. 2, No. 10). Especially interesting for their artistic

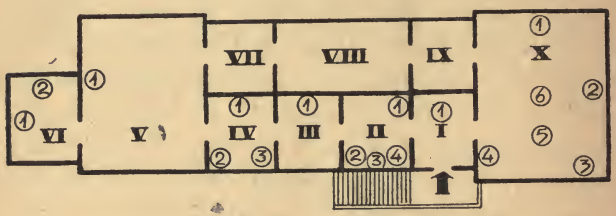

Fig. 3. Plan of the Museum.

value are sculptures Nos. 2027, 587 and 749 at Nos. 1, 3 and 4 of the plan, respectively, representing feats of the mythological hero Herakles (beginning of the 5th century B.C.). At No. 2 are fragments of a hymn to Apollo noteworthy for the musical notation which accompanies the text.

Room III. This room is dedicated to findings of the precinct of Athena Pronaia (Fig. 4). There is a model representing a restoration of the Tholos at No. 1.

Room IV. At Nos. 1 and 3 there are sculptures (5th century B.C.) from the pediments of

the Temple of Apollo (Fig. 2, No. 26). At No. 2 there are sculptures from the Treasury of the Sicyonians (Fig. 2, No. 8) and two young men's statues of the type called *kouroi* (youths) of the beginning of the 6th century B.C. They are believed to represent two young athletes, Cleobis and Biton. Their mother, a priestess of Hera, having asked from the goddess, after they had carried her to a religious festival, to give them perfect happiness, had her prayer answered as they both fell asleep and died.

Room V. Contains many sculptures, mainly Roman. At No. 1 is a statue of Antinous, a favorite of emperor Hadrian, who gave his life (130 A.D.) for the emperor.

Room VI. At No. 1 is the famous statue of the Charioteer. It was part of a four-horse chariot group, a gift of the tyrant of Gela and Syracuse (in Sicily) Gelon and his brother Polyzalus, in commemoration of a victory by Gelon at a Delphic chariot race in 486 B.C. At No. 2 are various bronze objects.

Rooms VII, VIII & IX. Mainly occupied by Mycenaean and archaic pottery.

Room X. At No. 1 is a model of a restoration of the façade of the Treasury of the Siphnians (Fig. 2, No. 9). At Nos. 2, 3 and 4: original fragments of the same treasury, representing an assembly of gods and mytholo-

gical scenes. At No. 5 there is the Sphinx of the Naxians (Fig. 2, No. 13). At No. 6 is the top and fragments of the Column of Acanthus (Fig. 2, No. 24) with the figures of the Thyiades.

THE CASTALIA SPRING

This famous spring is in the gorge dividing the Phaedriades, a little off the bend of the road to Arachova. Remains of the rock-cut basin of the ancient fountain, measuring 10×3 meters, can still be seen in the base of the Hyampeia crag. In ancient times it was no doubt richly ornamented, and constituted one of the most sacred and important spots of the area. It was the place where the pilgrims took the ritual purifying bath before entering the Precinct of Apollo. The reservoir on the highway is supplied by water from another spring 15 meters to the west of Castalia. The limpid water of Castalia was celebrated throughout the ancient world. It was only later that the Latin poets connected Castalia with the Muses, Apollo and poetic inspiration in general.

THE GYMNASIUM AND PALAESTRA

At the bend of the road, a path leads southward to the site of the **Gymnasium** (school for gymnastics) situated on two adjoining terraces. On the first and higher one there was a portico

180 meters long by 7 meters wide. In front there was an open space for foot races. On the lower terrace there are the ruins of the **Palaestra** (wrestling school) and baths, with a pool 10 meters in diameter. The athletes participating in the Pythian Games did their training here.

THE PRECINCT OF ATHENA PRONAIA

The path under the olive trees to the east, running parallel to the highroad, leads to the **Precinct of Athena Pronaia** (Fig. 4). The name means "before the temple", as the site was before the Temple of Apollo for the pilgrims coming from Phocis, at the east of Delphi. The name also may mean "guardian or forethought", as the form *pronoia* is also met with. The

Fig. 4. The Precinct of Athena Pronaia.

modern name of the locality is Marmaria. Athena Pronaia was worshiped as one of the patrons of Delphi.

In the walled enclosure (150 by 40 meters approx.) which had to be protected from the fall

of rocks from above by retaining walls, there were various sacred buildings of remotest antiquity. At No. 1 there were the *heroa* (meaning memorials in honour of heroes) and altars probably dedicated to patron gods. Such were the heroes, or half-gods, Phylakos and Autonoos, who were believed to have repulsed the Persians in 480 B.C., and Hyperochos, Laodikos and Pyrrhus who performed the same service against the Gauls in 279 B.C.

The **Temple of Athena Pronaia** (No. 2), was in the Doric order, and appears to date from the 6th century B.C. It was built on the site of an earlier fabric of the 7th century. It has suffered many destructions, among others, from the fall of rocks in 1905, which caused great damage. It may have been after such a catastrophe that the older temple was replaced by the newer Temple at No. 3.

Between the two temples, there are two supposed Treasuries, dating from the 6th (No. 4) and the 5th (No. 4 A) centuries B.C. The **Tholos** at No. 5, was built in the end of the 5th century B.C. It was in the Doric order and had only one row of twenty exterior columns. The cella had Corinthian columns in the interior and was adorned with black and white marble. In the centre of the circular cella there was a beautifully carved altar which is now in the Museum. The purpose of the Tholos, which means a domed building, is not certain. A complete reproduction of the restored building may be seen in the Museum.

PLACES OF INTEREST IN THE ENVIRONS

Around Delphi there are some places of historical, archaeological and artistic interest, amid scenery renowned for its beauty.

On the other side of Mt. Parnassus, on the Amphissa-Bralos road, near the village of Gravia, lies the famous Khani (=inn) of Gravia, where in 1821, Odysseus Androutsos, with a handful of men, succeeded in stemming the advance of 9,000 Ottomans to the south.

Deep in a solitary valley of the Helicon, one can visit the Byzantine Monastery of Osios Loukas, dating from the 11th century A.D., and famous for its rich and beautiful mosaics.

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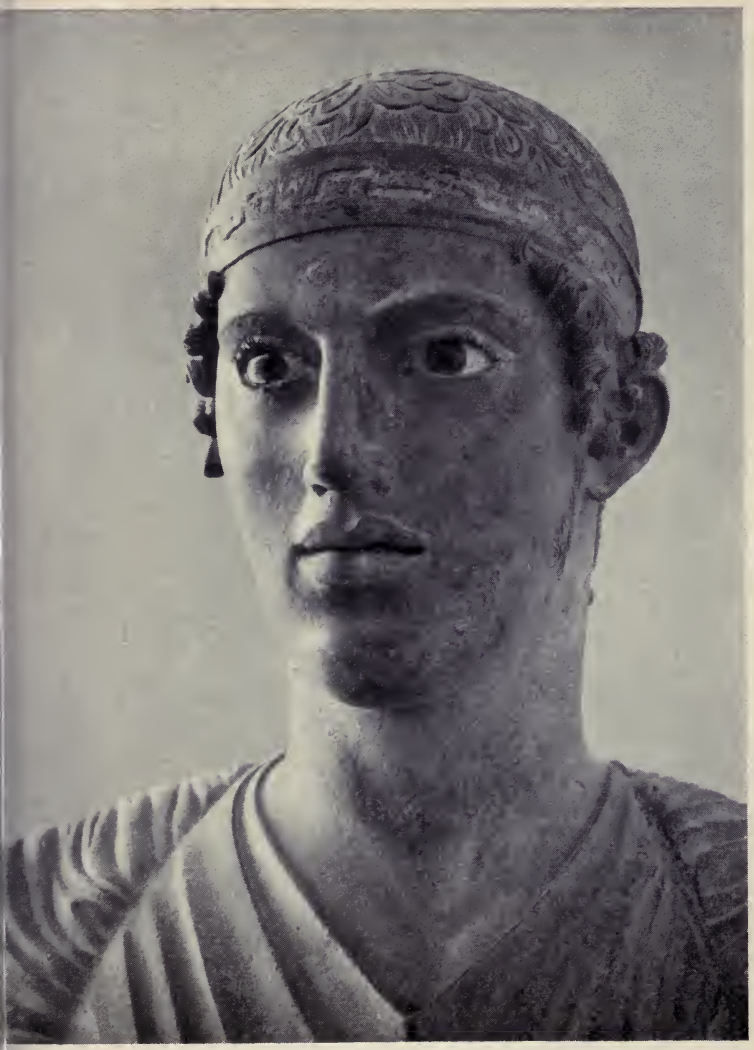

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Basin of the Castalia spring.

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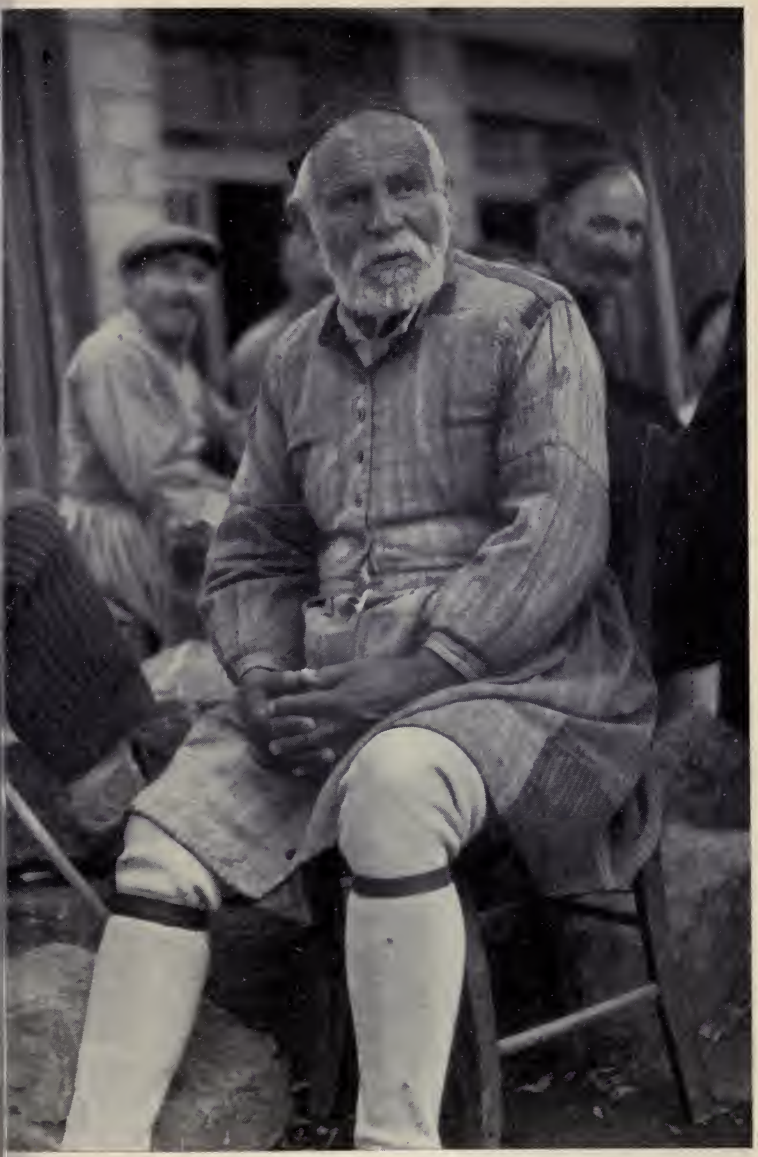
The Tholos.

A peasant of Arachova.



Peasant returning from the fields.

Castri. Young girl at the fountain.

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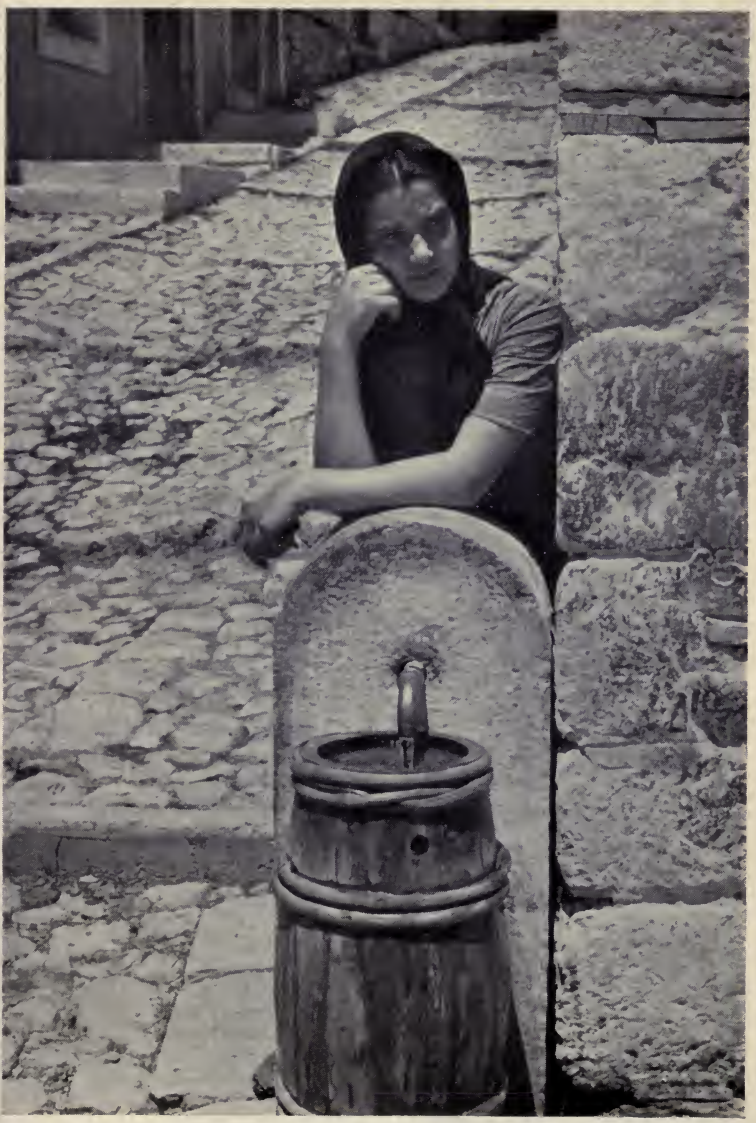
On the back of the picture:
A shepherd of Mt. Parnassus.



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